

VILA RECÔNCAVO

[Class C Families]

- *565 During the day young boys go about with only shorts on, or
291 with both shirt and shorts, depending upon the weather. Girls
always wear a dress. Children who are in the crawling stage
*565 become extremely dirty because of the amount of dirt tracked
515 into the house from the streets, although this is now changing
854 as a result of paving. Babies, however, seem to have a pro-
pensity for getting into the charcoal sack, usually kept near
the kitchen stove, and emerging well blackened. They are
bathed twice daily, morning and afternoon, at first in cold wa-
ter to accustom them to the cold water they will be using for
the rest of their lives. Bathing the child is usually considered
a pleasure for the mother as well as the baby, as is breast
feeding. If the child of light-skinned parents exhibits the geni-
*565 papo (a bluish spot near the base of the spine, sometimes
143 known as the "Mongolian blue spot") the mothers will take care
[826] not to let visitors see it, as the spot is thought to be a strong
indication of the nearness of Negro ancestry. It disappears
after the child is seven or eight months old.

- *565 The men and older boys of Class C take their daily baths in
515 the afternoon, either at one of the two wells which are behind
the convent and therefore out of sight of the town, or at wood-
en structures which have been built across the wells in the
Cortume. They stand on a wooden floor and drop a small buck-
et on a string down into the water, which is hoisted up and
poured over them, running back into the well with the soap
suds and whatever grime has come off their skin. Frequently
a woman when getting water will undress her son on the spot
and pour buckets of water over him. This is not done after a
boy has reached five years or six, however, and is never
done to a girl of any age. The women and girls take a daily
sponge bath in their kitchens late in the afternoon, before
starting to fix the evening meal. None of the houses has toi-
let facilities other than a secluded place in the back yard.
During a survey of housing facilities in the town, when the
question was asked, "Do you have a toilet?" the answer was
usually laughingly given, "What for?" (But practically every-
one knows what a toilet is, and there are several different
types in the town, belonging to upper-class houses. The con-
struction of a flush type, with an adequate cesspool, has been
known for many years.) After the daily bath most people put
on clean clothes in which they often sleep, although sleeping
garments range from daytime clothing to long nightgowns,
shorts, or nothing at all. Daytime clothing for the men con-
sists of little more than trousers, shirt, and wooden shoes